

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 COA-02 CG-00 EB-11 IO-14

DRC-01 ACDA-19 /142 W

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R 190836Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2544

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1160

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR KS KN

SUBJ: FISHING BOAT INCIDENT AND ANTI-NORTH PROPAGANDA
CAMPAIGN

REF: A SEOUL 1015 B SEOUL 1135

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOLLOWING FEB 15 FISHING BOAT INCIDENT,
ROKG HAS SUBSTANTIALLY INTENSIFIED AND BROADENED ITS
ANTI-NORTH KOREA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN (REF A). ROKG
OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ATTACKED
NORTHERN ACTION; PRESS CONTINUES EXTENSIVE COVERAGE
(REF B); AND MASS PROTEST RALLIES ARE BEING HELD
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. BEGINNING FEB 16 NUMEROUS MASS RALLIES HAVE BEEN
HELD, MAINLY IN MAJOR PORT CITIES, TO PROTEST "BRUTAL
ATTACK" ON ROK FISHING BOATS. DEMONSTRATORS REPORTEDLY
DEMANDED RELEASE OF CAPTURED FISHERMEN. LARGEST
REPORTED RALLIES HELD IN INCHON FEB 16,
WHERE "CITIZENS AND STUDENTS" CALLED FOR ESTABLISHMENT
OF STRONG DEFENSE POSTURE AGAINST NORTH KOREAN PROVO-
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CATION, AND IN PUSAN FEB 19. THE SEOUL

CHAPTER OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST LEAGUE HAS ANNOUNCED
A MAJOR "CITIZEN RALLY" SCHEDULED FOR FEB 21 IN SEOUL
STADIUM.

2. PRESS HAS GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE TO ROKG OFFICIALS'
WARNINGS TO THE NORTH. DEFENSE MINISTER SO, SPEAKING

BEFORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEFENSE COMMITTEE, IS QUOTED
AS SAYING ROK WILL NOT TOLERATE FURTHER ARMED PROVO-
CATION BY NORTH. SO ALSO REPORTED AS SAYING TENSIONS
HAVE BEEN RISING SINCE OCTOBER DUE TO INCREASED NORTH
KOREAN MILITARY ACTIVITIES. SNCC VICE CHAIRMAN
CHANG KI-YONG IS QUOTED AS TELLING NORTH THAT "SUCH
IRRESPONSIBLE ACTS ARE DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS ON YOUR
PART TO THREATEN PEACE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA."
CULTURAL AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MINISTER YUN URGED
NORTH KOREA TO APOLOGIZE FOR THEIR "CRIMINAL ATTACK"
AND TERMED NORTHERN CLAIM THAT BOATS WERE ESPIONAGE
SHIPS A "GLARING LIE".

3. SEVERAL QUASI GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE JOINED IN ANTI-
NORTH PROTEST. IN ADDITION TO WARNINGS BY KOREAN
VETERANS ASSOCIATION AND KOREAN ANTI-COMMUNIST LEAGUE,
KOREAN NATIONAL RED CROSS HAS APPEALED TO INTER-
NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND TO THE LEAGUE
OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES FOR HELP IN RELEASE OF CAPTURED
FISHERMEN.

4. EDITORIAL RESPONSE HAS BEEN UNANIMOUS IN CONDEMNATION
OF NORTH. PRESTIGIOUS TONGA ILBO FEB 16 CALLED
ON KOREAN PEOPLE TO STEP UP EFFORTS TO "SOLIDIFY NATIONAL
UNITY" WHILE "SHARPENING ALERTNESS AGAINST NORTH
KOREAN PROVOCATIONS". FEB 19 CHOSUN ILBO EDITORIAL
IS CRITICAL OF ROK DEFENSE POSTURE FOR FAILING TO
PROTECT FISHING BOATS.

5. ABOVE PROTEST ACTIVITIES ARE BEING ORCHESTRATED
BY ROKG AS PART OF ITS ANTI-NORTH KOREAN CAMPAIGN.

6. COMMENT: ROK GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICIALS
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IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH US HAVE NOT BOTHERED TO CONCEAL
PLEASURE AT CHANCE TO UTILIZE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT
IN ANTI-NORTH KOREA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. THEY ARE
OBVIOUSLY HOPEFUL INCIDENT WILL GIVE CREDENCE
TO ONGOING EFFORTS TO DIVERT PUBLIC CONCERN
FROM DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE TO NORTHERN THREAT.
OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT INCIDENT HAS HAD SOME PUBLIC
EFFECT ALONG LINES DESIRED BY ROKG, BUT EXTENT

AND DURATION NOT YET CLEAR.

HABIB

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